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BEIRUT L'ORIENT IN FRENCH 29 DEC 67 P 1 M
(ARTICLE IN SERIES WRITTEN BY "PROMINENT" FRENCH TELEVISION
REPORTER FRANCOIS CHALAIS--AN EXCLUSIVE TO L'ORIENT--TITLED "LIFE
IN HANOI" AND DESCRIBING THE REPORTER'S ONE-MONTH VISIT TO NORTH
VIETNAM. DATE OF THE VISIT NOT GIVEN. THE SERIES WAS ANNOUNCED
25 DECEMBER AND BEGAN 27 DECEMBER. THIS INSTALLMENT IS TITLED "THE
U.S. PRISONERS DO NOT UNDERSTAND")
(EXCERPTS) (PASSAGE OMITTED) I MET SOME AMERICANS IN HANOI--PILOTS,
OFTEN WOUNDED, HAVING EJECTED FROM THEIR PLANES. THEY--LIKE THE
VIETNAMESE THEY ARE MASSACRING, BUT FOR DIFFERENT REASONS--DO NOT
UNDERSTAND WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO THEM. HERE ARE SOME EXAMPLES OF THEIR
THINKING:

"WE WILL REBUILD YOUR BRIDGES." TO THIS PILOT, SOMEONE HAS BROUGHT
PICTURES OF DESTROYED BRIDGES. DO YOU RECOGNIZE THESE BRIDGES? YES,
SAYS THE PILOT, THIS SHOULD HAVE BEEN MY WORK. (PASSAGE OMITTED)
THEN HE IS SHOWN THE SAME PICTURES, TAKEN A SHORT WHILE BEFORE THE
FIRST PICTURES--ED.) THESE PICTURES SHOW MANY BODIES--SEVERAL
SSSS--SCATTERED AROUND THE BRIDGE. IS THIS ALSO YOUR WORK? THE
AMERICAN HESITATES, THEN SAYS: IT IS NOT MY FAULT IF PEOPLE ARE
FOOLISH ENOUGH TO PASS OVER BRIDGES WHILE I AM BOMBING. AND SOON HE
ADDS: MOREOVER I DO NOT UNDERSTAND YOU. YOU HAVE ONLY TO STOP THE

ACT...DIA-15

INFO...CSAF-1 FILE-1(17)CAC/JR

1 OF 3

Approved for Release
1 AUG 1987

1.1

DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE

JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN CENTER

MESSAGE CENTER

WAR: AS SOON AS YOU DO SO WE WILL REBUILD YOUR BRIDGES. (PASSAGE OMITTED) MY FATHER IS A MULTIMILLIONAIRE. I WILL PAY YOU FOR THEM. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

ANOTHER PILOT IS INJURED. THE DOCTOR ASKS HIM HOW HE FEELS. HE REPLIES: WELL, BUT I MUST TELL YOU SOMETHING DOCTOR. YOU ARE ALL QUITE KIND, BUT YOUR MEDICINES ARE WORTHLESS. ONLY AMERICAN MEDICINES ARE GOOD. YOU ARE DOING WHATEVER YOU CAN, BUT COMPARED TO U.S. DOCTORS, YOU ARE ONLY BEGINNERS. THEREFORE THIS IS WHAT I SUGGEST: WE HAVE CLARKBASE IN THE PHILIPPINES WHERE THEY HAVE EVERYTHING THAT IS NEEDED. YOU LET ME GO THERE AND AS SOON AS I RECOVER I WILL RETURN HERE TO GIVE MYSELF UP. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

DOWND U.S. PILOTS ENERGETICALLY REFUSE TO ADMIT THAT THEY MAY HAVE BEEN SHOT DOWN BY VIETNAMESE PILOTS--AN INTERIOR SPECIES IN THE MINDS OF THE AMERICAN PILOTS. NO, THEY WERE HIT BY SAM MISSILES OR BY ANTI-AIRCRAFT BATTERIES--BUT NEVER BY MIG PILOTS. ONE PILOT, FOR EXAMPLE, IS GIVEN ALL THE PROOF THAT HE WAS HIT BY ONE OF HIS VIETNAMESE COUNTERPARTS. HE DEFENDS HIMSELF VEHEMENTLY. NEVERTHELESS, THERE ARE IRREFUTABLE PICTURES. THEY EVEN BRING TO HIS HOSPITAL BED THE PILOT WHO DOWND HIS PLANE. THE AMERICAN STILL HESITATES, THEN SAYS: I WOULD HAVE NEVER BELIEVED IT, BUT EVIDENTLY IT IS AS YOU SAY. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

A MEETING WHICH WILL LEAVE ITS MARK ON MY LIFE:

MY MEETING WITH JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN WAS CERTAINLY ONE OF THOSE MEETINGS WHICH WILL AFFECT ME MOST PROFOUNDLY FOR THE REST OF MY LIFE. I HAD ASKED THE NORTH VIETNAMESE AUTHORITIES TO ALLOW ME TO PERSONALLY INTERROGATE AN AMERICAN PRISONER. THEY AUTHORIZED ME TO DO SO. WHEN NIGHT FELL, THEY TOOK ME--WITHOUT ANY PRECAUTIONS OR MYSTERY--TO A HOSPITAL NEAR THE GIA LAM AIRPORT RESERVED FOR THE MILITARY. (PASSAGE OMITTED) THE OFFICER WHO RECEIVES ME BEGINS: I ASK YOU NOT TO ASK ANY QUESTIONS OF POLITICAL NATURE. IF THIS MAN REPLIES IN A WAY UNFAVORABLE TO US, THEY WILL NOT HESITATE TO SPEAK OF "BRAINWASHING" AND CONCLUDE THAT WE THREATENED HIM. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

THIS JOHN SIDNEY MCCAIN IS NOT AN ORDINARY PRISONER. HIS FATHER IS NONE OTHER THAN ADMIRAL EDMOND JOHN MCCAIN, COMMANDER IN CHIEF OF U.S. NAVAL FORCES IN EUROPE. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

IN A WEAK VOICE, HE RELATES HIS STORY TO ME: I WAS CARRYING OUT A BOMBING MISSION, MY 23D TWENTYTHIRD RAID, OVER HANOI. IT WAS THEN

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MISSISSIPPI

THAT I WAS HIT. I WANTED TO EJECT BUT WHILE DOING SO I BROKE BOTH ARMS AND MY RIGHT THIGH. UNCONSCIOUS I FELL IN A LAKE. SOME VIETNAMESE JUMPED INTO THE WATER AND PULLED ME OUT. LATER I LEARNED THERE MUST HAVE BEEN ABOUT 12 TWELVE OF THEM. THEY IMMEDIATELY TOOK ME TO HOSPITAL, IN A CONDITION TWO INCHES AWAY FROM DEATH. A DOCTOR OPERATED ON MY THIGH. OTHERS AT THE SAME TIME DEALT WITH MY ARMS.

HOW ARE YOU TREATED HERE?

VERY WELL. EVERYBODY IS VERY NICE TO ME.

HOW IS THE FOOD?

HE SMILES TEENILY. OBVIOUSLY, THE LEAST REACTION WOUNDS HIM. THIS ISN'T PARIS, BUT IT IS ALRIGHT.

DO YOU HAVE SOMETHING TO READ?

THEY HAVE SUGGESTED THAT I READ, BUT MY HANDS ARE UNABLE TO HOLD EVEN A NEWSPAPER.

HIS CIGARETTE HAS GONE OUT. HE TALKS TO ME ABOUT HIS WIFE WHO LIVES IN JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA, AND ABOUT HIS THREE CHILDREN. AND NOW HE ADDRESSES HIS FAMILY: I KNOW THAT THIS IS GOING TO TURN OUT WELL. I HOPE THAT I WILL SEE YOU SOON. I WILL BE WELL. THIS IS ALL. (PASSAGE OMITTED)

01/2232Z JAN

BT

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